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ABSTRACT

Doing something positive about youth gangs will require hard work, attitude change, and enlisting the help of many people. In addition to the many obvious causes of gangs, there are less well-known factors, such as academic achievement, that are related to youth participation in gangs. Participation in extracurricular activities helps young people resist the lure of gangs. It is obvious that communities must provide safe neighborhoods, and it is also apparent that any program that does not receive wide neighborhood support will not be effective in opposing gangs. Even in an active and mobilized neighborhood, the forces that support gangs can be overwhelming, especially those related to the economics of illegal drugs. Addressing the drug problem and providing other economic opportunities for youth are essential to overcoming gangs. It is important to mobilize existing strengths in the community, such as that of churches, to create hope and community solidarity. (SLD)

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Youth Gangs — In Search of a Miracle: Our Part

by Norman Randolph, Ph.D.

Doing something positive about youth gangs is not about easy answers. It's about hard work. It's about giving up old attitudes. It's about eliciting the help of others — many others. And it's about changing neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods with gangs, however, won't likely change if only one or a few local organizations are involved. And involvement includes dealing with economic, family, religious, educational, and other social forces that are not always obvious for their relevance.

Less Obvious Forces

There are several conditions, not commonly known, affecting the development of youth which relate to the advancement of youth gangs. For example, one should not overlook the relationship of academic achievement to the risk level of students joining gangs. We know, for example, that children who have achievement problems in schools are at great risk of engaging in delinquency if given the opportunity when they get older (Davis et al. 1991). Many studies worldwide linking delinquency to cognitive achievement level in schools (Hurrelmann and Engel 1992). Success in school has a strong inverse correlation with deviancy. Nearly every educator knows that the behavior of students can seldom be fully understood apart

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from what they have been taught in their classrooms. Kids who fail in school in areas where youth gangs are present are far easier targets for gang recruitment than those who do well in their academic course work. An important, though partial approach to gang prevention, therefore, involves helping all youngsters to master certain minimal academic competencies.

Similar is the case for athletics. For example, in a large longitudinal study from 1988 through 1991 by researchers from Johns Hopkins University and Syracuse University, it was found that young, poor, inner-city African-American males who participated in organized school and community-based team athletic programs were more likely to overcome their poverty and other disadvantages than those not involved in organized sports. The research data is clearly supportive of the view that organized athletics tends to foster a *resiliency* of character among many youngsters for resisting otherwise damming social forces (Braddock et al. 1992).

In the experience of almost any youth worker, it is not just team sports that produces a resiliency of character. Those active in band, orchestra, or any other organized team program during after-school hours or vacations are also not likely to get into trouble with authorities. There is something positive at work when students actively participate with one's peers in extra-curricular programs that emphasize team work and commitment to the group. Participation in certain kinds of teams helps young people to share law-abiding social values. They learn to accept the rules for being reasonably civil toward one another and to accept team responsibility. They learn to be dependable and to expect dependability from others.

"Active participation in culturally valued teams tends to reduce feelings of social isolation from and resentment toward society."

Furthermore, active participation in culturally valued teams tends to reduce feelings of social isolation from, and resentment toward, society. Participation in socially valued groups that require working with the other members to achieve group purposes does something more than just keep kids busy. Such participation tends to socialize young people to accept cultural values that make them somewhat resistant to being recruited into gangs.

Yet even successful school achievement and active participation in socially valued youth groups may not be enough to inoculate a sufficiently large proportion of young persons from the pressure to join gangs — especially where there is a major gang presence. I have known some excellent students who participated in school sports but joined gangs.

How were conditions different for those few who did well in school and engaged in school clubs or sports but still joined gangs from those who stayed away from gang membership? One of two conditions clearly separated these

students. Those student athletes, band members, cheerleaders, budding thespians in school plays, and others who found it extremely dangerous to go between their homes, schools, and community centers during after-school hours because of neighborhood gangs tended to end their participation in after-school events. Their grades then suffered which increased their risk and they then joined gangs for self-protection.

A second characteristic associated with young people involved in desirable youth activities who joined gangs was the level of participation. For those whom the activity created or reinforced a strong social club atmosphere of friendships, the gangs were not viewed as a viable alternative. Those who did not mix well with the others were least resistant to gang pressures. There is a lesson here. Schools and community centers should work to foster an *esprit de corps* in team-oriented groups by promoting strong peer friendships within the group.

Sound research data supports that community youth programs like those offered by Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts, YMCAs, Just for Girls, and certain religion-based youth groups reduce the likelihood of their attendees joining gangs. Such social experiences have been shown to be critical in the lives of many young people who have overcome the limited life chances imposed by poverty or a dysfunctional homelife (Wang and Gordon 1994). At the community level, I am familiar with two suburban, low-income areas of Pittsburgh which are very similar in social and economic composition. One, however, has few of its youth active in healthy youth organizations. In the other, the kids are "joiners" from the earliest years and few are gang members.

By developing healthy relationships with peers to achieve common purposes, youth acquire experience in learning responsibility for other people. Those youngsters who take on a responsibility for others decrease their odds of being at risk for deviancy. This includes caring for siblings or managing households for incapacitated parents.

Caring attitudes are more easily instilled when caring for others than when one is just responsible for one's self. The acceptance of responsibility for others it should be remembered, is at the core of a healthy society. Unfortunately, positions and opportunities for developing social responsibility through work or play are provided to too few youngsters in some communities — particularly in underclass areas. Hence, a task for any community with underclass neighborhoods is to create sufficient "caring opportunities" for the young who live there.

Neighborhood Security: The Obvious

Communities must provide for safe neighborhoods and that implies relatively little organized youth violence. In fact, the terms "youth gang" and "dangerous community" are almost redundant. How does a community assure safe environments for its youth and others? The answer is that it can't without

the help of law enforcement, the courts, and even the places where youth are incarcerated.

Yet as many judges and police officers will tell you, there is as much need to reform their systems and change people's perceptions of them as there is to reform their institutions. For example, deservedly or not, in many underclass neighborhoods there is a need to enhance the perceived moral credibility of the police and courts. They are looked upon cynically and with distaste. This must be changed if law enforcement, the courts, and detention centers are to make a maximum contribution to a safe community — and in some cases this will mean a change in the way the police, detention center staff, and judges do their jobs.

One should not think, however, that a safe community is solely a task for law enforcement agencies, jails, and the courts, and not the citizens. While constraining criminal gangs is a job for our security personnel, prosecutors, and magistrates, it is a task that requires neighbors to join together in common effort. In some areas of the country this lesson has been learned only after many frightening problems. With their "backs to the wall" the neighbors worked together to take back their neighborhoods from drug dealers and gangsters. While the overall problem wasn't lessened (i.e., the drug dealers moved to other neighborhoods), particular neighborhoods became healthier places in which to live.

Before the neighbors could cause the dealers to move, however, they first had to become a *true community of purpose*, and not just a bunch of people living near one another. A community is much more than people sharing the same space. The point is that disparately living neighbors must join together in common purpose if they are to rid themselves of gangs or help prevent gangs from coming into their neighborhoods in the first place.

I have observed some intelligent people who work with gangs but fail to recognize this requirement to have the community behind them. There are many otherwise effective programs for dealing with gangs where the neighbors of the gang members are not actively supporting gang intervention programs in their neighborhoods. In fact, some residents may resent a gang intervention program because they fear it attracts gang members to their area. There also may be, unfortunately, a few parents who benefit from illicit gang activity and they, too, will be resistant unless they can be shown there are major costs to bear. Such fears and resistance need to be addressed. But dealing with the neighbors can be frustrating unless one is very persuasive or understanding and, most importantly, works with them.

Gang-intervention program staff usually become frustrated because, while they help many youngsters, many more than they can help come to their attention. Because they have tried so hard and have failed to stem the tide, many think nothing can be done other than cope with their deteriorating situation.

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When their problem gets worse they sometimes feel that they must negotiate, or worse, even pander to gangs. Meanwhile, the gangs get bigger and stronger, and more people's lives are lost to crime, despair, and even death.

This is not to say that we should neither negotiate nor deal directly with gangs, for we should. Rather, any program that does not receive wide neighborhood support in a strong and aggressive manner will be ineffective. If any area is to be effective in dealing with the gang problem, it must figure out how to bring the residents of each neighborhood together around several common purposes and not just to rid themselves of gangs. The more neighborhood problems the neighbors work on, the more successful they will be in addressing any one problem. This is, in part, because a community is difficult to maintain when it is based on one issue.

"The more neighborhood problems the neighbors work on, the more successful they will be in adressing any one problem."

Nonetheless, a true community usually begins to form in a neighborhood around one issue. The threat of gangs in poverty areas is a place to begin when residents are victims of crime. It appears to me communities that have successfully combatted crime had citizens' organizations best described as "Take Back the Neighborhood" programs. The individuals in these groups often did a lot of marching, patrolling, and monitoring together for the police. These types of groups have been shown to be quite effective — particularly at moving drug sales to other communities. There is something more they must do, however. First they must create a basis for a relatively permanent impact by expanding their efforts to a variety of community "uplifting" purposes.

In neighborhoods similar to those in the Pittsburgh area the task of developing true communities may be easier than in certain areas of Los Angeles, New York City, and Chicago, where many, many gang members are the children or even grandchildren of gang members. Yet helping neighborhoods to become true communities should be of considerable value there, as well.

The residents in many of our crime-related areas, however, do not know what must be done to organize in ways that will maximize their effectiveness. On the other hand, there usually are persons available in social service agencies who understand what it takes to organize a community through local leadership. It seems to some, therefore, difficult to understand why the people in the areas where the gangs function are often the last to organize, if they organize at all. There are, after all, many examples of leaders living in poverty across the land who have been successful — including Pittsburgh. The way they achieved their success can be shared. A group of neighbors can develop their own neighborhood improvement associations. And those in sur-

rounding areas should be there for them in support with resources.

Yet even if a neighborhood with gangs is mobilized and active in working to reduce youth gangs, and even if the schools and community programs are adequately providing for the young, and even if the best law enforcement is present, is that enough? To be sure, it would be a big help and the community would be better off — and everyone would be most grateful. Unfortunately, however, a community's safety and good feelings will not last long unless there is success on other fronts as well. This is because there are strong forces that can undercut the effectiveness of the good deeds done by neighbors, teachers, police officers, youth workers, and others. Some of these forces lie in the economic sector. For example, conditions regarding opportunities for work and the preparation of students to make the transition from school to work are critical factors in the emergence of gangs, especially when certain other problems are present.

The Economic Force of Drugs

By now most people recognize that illicit drug sales is seen by many young people, as well as adults, as an attractive economic and social status opportunity. When you have a 30- to 90-percent unemployment rate, selling drugs is the only viable chance many people see for overcoming their condition. Currently, all persons approved by the gang, young or old, can make a lot of money from selling drugs and they seem to lose little if caught. For each one caught and incarcerated, there are several more who are ready to take his or her place. In other words, drug sales will not end with strong law enforcement and prison terms because the economic incentives to sell drugs are too great.

Furthermore, there is considerable skepticism among our youth about why some drugs are illicit. They see adults. They listen to television. They observe and talk about how the culture's drugs of choice — alcohol and tobacco — kill more people than illegal drugs such as marijuana. They conclude that society is hypocritical. This undercuts drug education programs in school and in the media.

Many also are cynical about enforcement. Read the newspapers. Drug sales have been used to corrupt police officers, bankers, teachers, and business persons. At first hand, many young people in gang-plagued areas know, or have heard about, pillars of the community who are, or have been, on "the take." There is also the cynicism generated in the low-income areas over how the larger society uses different standards to penalize the use and sale of cocaine derivatives like "crack," in contrast to the use and sale of pure cocaine — the drug of choice for many higher income persons. The reasoning of hypocrisy is clear. Hypocrisy makes it quite difficult to make a persuasive case for controlling illicit drugs.

Illicit drugs, as any one on the street knows, are at the heart of not only criminally oriented youth gangs, but of a great deal of adult blue- and white-collar crime and violence. Responding to this, society has placed an ever increasing emphasis on punishment for drug use or sales. However, this increase in punishment has not curtailed either the demand or the supply of drugs. There is now a greater supply of illicit drugs than ever, and the variety of drugs used has also increased. As reported in a recent television documentary, there are now five million children who sniff glue and other substances to get high — and these substances can be easily obtained from grocery stores (CNN April 11, 1995). I believe it. Kids in my neighborhood know it.

"How do we become credible when we tell young people to just say no?"

Some make a persuasive case that trying to restrict the supply of illicit drugs is a waste of money and resources — that it even creates drug use and other crime problems (Szasz 1985). Others want to build more jails and prisons, even though we have in the last decade tripled the number who are incarcerated. Whatever is done, society should consider alternatives for reforming its drug control policies so as to reduce demand. There will always be an easy supply of mind-altering drugs, whether illicit or not. If demand is reduced the economic motivation to engage in drug sales is reduced. Unless demand is reduced, the only way to reduce the economic motivation for selling drugs is to decriminalize most illicit drugs and do as was done with alcohol after prohibition. However, since most people in this culture are not close to being ready for the decriminalization of drugs, the only alternative is to work on demand through socialization. Scare campaigns obviously haven't worked. If society could reduce the demand for mind-altering drugs, it would surely reduce the presence of youth gangs as we know them now.

This leads to the big question: How does a community reduce demand? Is it effective to have a sheriff's deputy or substance abuse counselor show up at school every so often and give a lecture on the importance of just saying no? How do we become credible when we tell young people to "just say no?" When children see their parents drink alcohol and smoke, what message are they sending? What about the advertising that sustains a view that all problems can be solved with a pill? Will teachers ever have sufficient influence to persuade enough of their students to say no to illicit drugs, and thereby end the booming illicit business of drug sales? Teachers can help, but not in the way many of our current drug education programs are taught.

What else can a community do to reduce illicit drugs as the economic basis of youth gangs and crime? To our advantage, there are data on the most effective programs and those that seem to waste money. Should not a community seek extensive input on the evalu-

ation of drug programs? It is strange that so many educators and justice system personnel have not seriously examined the data on the effectiveness of drug education programs. Some programs that are touted in the media and on bumper stickers have little support from independent researchers.

There are, in addition to opportunities to sell illicit drugs, other economic conditions that should be considered. They center on two sides of economic opportunity: the training of students to make the transition from school to work and the creation of jobs.

Economics of Opportunity

There must be work opportunities at the point of leaving school that are motivational if society is to stem the growth of gangs and other social welfare problems. To be motivational the students must have developed the competencies to be able to accept the opportunity to work. And the work must be motivational in the sense that it is seen as possible and viable for self by young people. Adolescents also must feel that taking advantage of the work opportunities made available to them will bring them some respect and economic satisfaction. At the entry level these jobs need not be high-tech positions. They may require little skill, but they must be seen by young people as pertinent to their needs at the time and one step on a ladder to better things. There aren't, however, enough low-skill jobs to go around in the high-unemployment and gang-infested areas of my county.

On the other hand, given what our mass culture teaches about what is deserving of respect, and how much one should be paid, low-tech jobs will not be too motivational for some youth — but any work will be motivational for others. We need more job opportunities at the entry level.

This raises the question: What does it take to get private enterprise to create sufficient work opportunities? Should our schools join with the private sector? What can we expect of government? Can our various institutions work together to produce needed work opportunities?

To make matters worse, as the business community becomes more and more international under free-trade conditions, with low-wage jobs moving to other countries, and as North America finds itself only competitive in the high-tech area, there may appear fewer economic reasons to create low-level jobs outside of certain service areas (e.g., fast food restaurants). This is debatable. Some contend that there is considerable economic justification for more and different kinds of low-tech jobs if certain incentives are offered.

Yet even if a sufficient number of satisfactory low-level job entry opportunities are created, there is still the matter of preparation for entering the work force. Many of our young people cannot meet even low-level employment standards because they lack skills,

knowledge, or appropriate attitudes. Obviously our communities have major work to do to prepare a much larger proportion of their youth for work in both lower and higher technical vocations than has occurred in the past.

To further exacerbate the economic problem behind youth gangs, many young people are not wanted by any employer for jobs requiring the least bit of skill. They are in a kind of *Catch 22* situation. This is because they have been arrested for thievery or other crimes, and many employers will not hire them. The few employers in and near the underclass neighborhoods know who has been in trouble with the law, and they do not want potential troublemakers around. Young people who have had problems with authorities are then left with no way of earning money other than to steal, rob, or sell drugs. What should be done for or with these youngsters?

Another powerful stimulator of gang development is when you have a major community-wide economic shock, such as massive lay-offs in a relatively short time to workers unprepared to compete for other jobs.

Economic Shock and Gangs

Pittsburgh, like many areas, was an economic haven for people with limited education who sought middle-income manufacturing jobs. Through the 1950s, the steel mills hired people into low-tech positions by the hundreds of thousands. People flocked into Pittsburgh, like so many other cities, from every corner of this nation and Europe, too. There occurred a mass migration of poor, rural African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and whites seeking the American Dream of a better life.

"What does it take to create sufficient work opportunities?"

Then, after several years of relative prosperity with its attendant social stability — as was the case in Western Pennsylvania — the steel mills closed. Only those who had managed to develop the education and skills needed for positions elsewhere had much of a chance of finding new work, and these people tended to move away. Those who moved away tended to be stable in their family relationships and held the dominant values of the culture. As they left, they reduced the social stability of their former neighborhoods. This is what happened in the housing projects where I lived.

Others who found work and stayed in their locality often received only a fraction of their former income, or found only part-time work. No longer could such a large number of persons, with a high school education or less, look forward to achieving the American Dream. They were in shock. Alcoholism increased. Pain reduction and survival became the order of the day.

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This economic shock also placed great strain on the rest of the Pittsburgh area. The welfare rolls became overtaxed; the police, schools, and fire departments suffered. People and organizations fought each other for smaller and smaller pieces of the tax pie. As some of our neighborhoods suffered, high unemployment, prices, and taxes rose; and many more fled to other communities. This further hastened deterioration. Every part of our infrastructure was hurt. Losing the tax base of the steel mills and the drastically reduced spending of employee earnings caused many of our local businesses to close. Adults, who earlier would have been at work, were now at home or on the streets. The strain was felt first by the families involved in the lay-offs and those who lost their businesses.

There was a dramatic increase in one-parent households, many in their teens. As an educator, I saw first hand the appearance of more and more "throw-away" children. Another outcome was the large number of young persons who became overly dependent on public assistance. While most people on welfare are there for a short time, a sufficiently large number of families became permanently dependent to sustain a mistaken stereotype. The stereotype was that nearly all who are on welfare are on the dole for life because they don't want to work. Lacking work skills and meaningful work opportunities should not be confused with a lack of desire to work.

While some parents and many children see no future but the streets, others are not so pessimistic. They seek work. Yet whatever the case, parents living in poverty, unless they have uncommon resources, fortitude, and self-discipline, simply can not monitor their children and compete effectively with the street gangs for loyalty and commitment. Parents, especially single, teenage parents, are hard put to keep body and soul together. Teenage parents also are more likely to produce children with impairments requiring considerable public expenditure; and, to make matters worse, are more prone than older parents to be abusive or neglectful with their children. Teenage fathers, also, are seldom around (McEvoy and Erickson 1994). Teenage parents are thus a major source of future gang members.

> **"Teenage parents are a major source of future gang members."**

Even where both parents are adult, present, and have jobs, they often work different shifts at low-paying jobs to make ends meet. Something has to give. Often it is their children. Anyone who has worked in the schools of working class parents knows the tiredness of many of the parents. Hope is difficult to maintain amid conditions where high lay-offs occur and where parents are working but being paid lower-than-poverty wages.

Estrangement and frustration, on the other hand, are easily experienced. As a result, many parent-child interactions are of a simple maintenance character, intended to meet basic needs such as feeding and clothing. The kind of emotional intimacy and joy of companionship associated with happy homes is somehow lost in the daily struggle just to survive.

To complicate matters, making the picture worse, many who are able to work elsewhere at reasonable wages have left their neighborhoods. In the case of minorities who were concentrated in various ghetto neighborhoods, this meant that the middle class which provided for much stability of values left town. In the African-American communities of Pittsburgh, the middle class (i.e., teachers, dentists, accountants, business people, etc.) quickly departed from the inner city. They moved in large numbers at about the same time as the economic shock hit the ghetto and they gained the civil right to move through the removal of employment and housing restrictions. When they exited, a cultural climate of despair became the dominant force. It precipitated a general cultural value that one should do whatever it takes to survive with as little pain as possible.

Survival became their primary goal, with psychological *escape* a close second. Some found escape from their wretchedness through the positive outlets of their churches or other community groups. There they found and gave social support. At the other extreme, some took to mind-altering substances. They sought to kill the pain of their life with alcohol and other drugs. While perhaps a temporary relief, chemical substances only made their suffering worse in the long run.

It is no accident that in our poorest areas you often find considerable spending on lotteries and a high incidence of liquor stores. One is for hope in a future (which is a very long shot and depletes the income of most), and the other is for quick relief (even if it is temporary and causes more pain down the line). A population without hope is more amenable to relatively inexpensive illicit drugs than populations busy at work with realistic hopes for their future. This is why crack has sold well in underclass areas, while "pure" cocaine is more the drug of choice in affluent areas. Cheap crack is becoming the dominant business activity of gangs. Is it any wonder that the most serious youth gang activity in the Pittsburgh area occurred first in those neighborhoods most harmed by the quick closing of the steel mills?

The Youth/Adult Ratio

If there is one thing that stands out about the people in the low-income, minority neighborhoods of the Pittsburgh region with which I am familiar, it is the overly high ratio of young people to adults. When I grew up in the projects there were far more adults present than is now the case. This is important because the magnitude of the proportion of youth present is a major correlate of crime (U.S. Department of Justice

1995). And as others have also observed, youth is associated with out-of-wedlock birth, more younger female-headed homes, and welfare dependency (W. J. Wilson 1987, J. Q. Wilson 1986).

It appears that the hypothesis of James Q. Wilson is born out in the low-income minority neighborhoods of the Pittsburgh region: " . . . There is a critical mass of young persons in a given community, such that when the mass is reached or increased suddenly and substantially, a self-sustaining chain reaction is set off that creates an explosive increase in the amount of crime, addiction, and welfare" (J. Q. Wilson 1986).

I would add to this hypothesis that a high crime rate in a community is not left very long to individual criminal entrepreneurs. Crime, I believe, tends to become organized when it becomes profitable for criminal organizations. For example, the retail sale of illicit drugs is increasingly being controlled by youth gangs at the local level where I live. The violence in the community is more and more orchestrated and should not be looked upon as simply the result of individuals. In other words, crime is more and more, in minority low-income areas, the result of organized crime, albeit the ages of the youth involved. As crime becomes organized by youth gangs and the gangs affiliate, effective intervention becomes more difficult to achieve through attempts to persuade individuals to change. Attempts at persuasion are further reduced when there is a high ratio of young people to adults in the community.

Thus, there are two more implications for reducing gang activity in low-income neighborhoods where the youth are in high concentrations. These include finding more effective ways of reducing teenage pregnancies and developing teenage parenting programs.

"Yet we should be wary of stereotypes about families living in poverty conditions."

Yet we should be wary of stereotypes about families living in poverty conditions. Even in poverty-plagued neighborhoods there are valuable human resources and sources of hope.

A Source for Hope

We need to be aware of the strengths and resiliency that exists among many of those whose life chances are so much lower than the balance of society. We need to avoid believing that poor families of color or destitute Appalachian white families are so broken, unstable, or problem-ridden that they have no resources to help themselves. Groups of poor families of color, as others, have survived in extremely hostile environments for several hundred years. We need to examine what has given them this resiliency and what has given so many of them the power to overcome their barriers.

Whether it be poor African-American families living in the ghettos of Pittsburgh, poor white families of Appalachia, destitute Native Americans, or migrant Hispanics, there is much that is positive that deserves our attention.

For one, there has emerged among many of the families of impoverished people a bonding of support among one another during hard times. Many have developed their own institutions of support. For example, for poor African-Americans isolated by the larger society, the black church has been there to aid in their survival. The concept of the black church like other institutions, of course, cannot be separated from the families that make them up. Church-families in the most destitute of circumstances in some areas of Pittsburgh have reduced several of the conditions that sustain youth gangs.

As previously mentioned, there are two poor areas that I know well in the Pittsburgh area close to the same social and economic condition. They illustrate the relative contribution that black churches, temples, and mosques can make. Both areas are primarily African-American in population. However, one has several strong, truly community-based churches of active families, while the other does not. One has a huge gang problem, the other does not, although it is feeling the press for gangs. In the one community where the gangs are not yet very active, the churches and their families are inseparable. And they work to implement a better community in every way, and not just on how to get to heaven. They are involved with their children and other people's children at school, at community events, and on the street.

In the other community where the gangs are well-entrenched, the churches have not as yet reached out in their communities as many might prefer. In the first community the gang problem is much lower because the church-families are active in their homes, schools, and all community events with programs that involve the participation of its youth. This further illustrates a principle of social life a community forum should consider. Creating an intimate community of caring people breaks down social isolation, fosters bonds of love and respect, and produces social stability.

Churches, temples, and mosques can be a positive force for change. I believe this without regard to theological preference. They can be effective, not by infringing on constitutional rights, but by simply being a moral community force and creating many instances for people to join hands — from fostering neighborhood team sports to social events that bond people together in decent and common purpose. For example, in the healthier community when a poor single mother moves into the projects, people appear from a neighborhood church to offer support and attractive activities. They do not demand church attendance to be helpful, for they live by example and not by preaching alone.

What happens if moral social support is not provided in one's home, school, community center, or religious institution? To be sure, there still will be a survival of sorts. Some parents who

wonder how they will make it through the day accept the cash their children bring home from selling drugs or stealing. Some engage in illegal acts. They will do what it takes to survive by their standards — which seldom are high. It can be reasonably summed up that people and families in our poorest areas have learned to survive against all odds because they want to survive for a better day. They do not want to die. A community can capitalize on this quest for survival.

What miracles do we need? Some might believe that all would be well if the steel mills or other low-tech manufacturing jobs were brought back to the Pittsburgh area. However, without special incentives, how many rational entrepreneurs would be willing to risk their capital to come into an area of high crime and criminally oriented youth gangs? Yet, even if the mills were brought back (while it would help), it would not be near enough. New problems are now present.

There are now youth and adult crime families in many of our neighborhoods that were not there when we had the mills. There are people with a vested interest in the poverty that exists. Many young people would not, for instance, want to leave their gangs and do the hard work demanded in the mills. Others have resigned themselves to minimal welfare payments or charity. To repeat, however, most do not. They want an opportunity to move ahead.

We could use a miracle, but while we wait, we need to get on and solve our problems as best we can. We must help people to be prepared for the new high-tech society and we must help people who, for whatever reason, can only participate in low-tech work.

> **"But what needs to be done to make life better in the relatively near future?"**

One "miracle" we might work to achieve is for our educational and other establishments to deliver on a promise — a promise to develop the competencies in all of our youth that are needed for participation as adults in the fruits of this culture. This, of course, would involve helping with the transition of young people from school to work. Schools and youth programs must also deliver on their promise of fostering in all students the core values of good citizenship. Those achievements, however, would be long-term "pay-offs." But what needs to be done to make life better in the relatively near future? What miracles do we need to deal effectively with those who are in or out of prison, but who are intent on violence or crime?

Miracles: What's to Know?

The first thing to remember is that miracles are not about what mortals do. As mortals we must take responsibility and plan for making this a better world — which includes being free from

crime-oriented youth gangs. As mortals we need to exercise our moral responsibility in a realistic and community-wide fashion. To do this, there must be a plan and a program for change that enlists active participatory support throughout the entire community.

Whatever plan we follow, we must figure out how to make sure there will be a dovetailing of multiple community forces. Foremost, these forces must include organizations of neighbors where the gang members live. If need be, we must help in the creation of such neighborhood organizations because they have critical roles to play. They must be involved in developing the plan. Then, with the plan, the community must "keep its eye on task," so to speak, and not be deterred.

The miracles we are seeking can be ultimately of our own making (and prayer wouldn't hurt). To help in this miracle, we must be guided by two basic principles. First, positive change requires an inclusive approach; it involves maximum feasible participation rather than exclusion of groups and individuals. Second, positive change is founded upon a shared feeling of hope. And hope itself is created when people are given a realistic possibility that their efforts will result in a better life. Opportunity creates hope — and hope will help us to put violence back into the box. ⌘

Review

Break It Up

Managing Student Fights
(27.5 minutes)

by Arnold P. Goldstein, James Palumbo, and Susan Striepling

Research Press
P.O. Box 9177
Champaign, IL 61826

Purchase $295
Rental $55/three days
Preview available

Designed as a companion to their book by the same title, this video dramatizes realistic scenes of teachers employing fight management skills and procedures to safely handle fight situations in all levels of school-based settings. A free copy of their book accompanies the video. A team approach is emphasized with teachers in each of nine critical steps:

1. Making a quick assessment
2. Calling for help
3. Using defusing tactics
4. Separating disputants
5. Controlling the crowd
6. Interviewing disputants
7. Taking disciplinary action
8. Debriefing bystanders
9. Attending to your own needs

Fighting in school is an experience that not only causes vulnerability to the disputants but to those who must break it up. If done inappropriately the costs can be considerable. This video is recommended for teacher inservice but with the stipulation a person skilled in the procedures covered is present to provide workshop assistance in the details of confrontation.

Hear What You Missed

At our conferences we have had sessions audio-taped for the convenience of attendees. Safe Schools Coalition receives no remuneration from this service and does not warrant any tape. Different companies provide this service. Below you will find listings for three recent conferences and whom to call to receive prices and ordering information.

Fifth International Conference on Sexual Assault and Harassment on Campus

☎ 214-638-8273
FAX 214-638-0954

- *Welcoming Remarks/Keynote Address: Sexual Harassment: Legal and Policy Implications for Schools*
- *Minority Concerns in Developing and Implementing Sexual Assault/Harassment Policies*
- *Charactenstics of Undetected Male Sex Offenders*
- *Adjudicating Cases of Alleged Sexual Assault*
- *Future Directions and Program*
- *Sexual Harassment in the Schools: It's Against the Law – A Model Prevention Program for Secondary Schools*
- *Working with African-American Males and Masculinity*
- *Your Next Call: Initial Response to Sexual Assaults*
- *Strategies for Eliminating Sexual Harassment*
- *Coalitions, Partnerships and Mergers*
- *Third Party Concerns in Sexual Harassment Mediation*
- *Working with Soronties to Education Members on Sexual Assault*
- *Sexual Harassment: Preventative Measures and Assertiveness Training*
- *College Men's Sex Games and Talk*
- *Clinical Care Issues Following Sexual Assault: Guidelines for Caregivers, Counselors and Administrators*
- *Change, Change, Change: Legal Aspects of Sexual Assault and Harassment*
- *Teaching Gender and Sexual Ehtics in Professional Schools*
- *Date Rape, It's Criminal*
- *Defining Sexual Assault on Campus: A Two-Dimensional Model*
- *Sexual Harassment: Recognizing, Responding and Prevention*
- *Surviving a Sexual Assault Advocacy Program*
- *The Power of People: Assessing the Effectiveness of Large Scale Campus Programs*
- *The Nation's First Higher Education Center Against Violence and Abuse*
- *Standards of Care: Treating Victims of Sexual Assault*
- *Educating '90s Style: Peer Education with a Twist*
- *Campus Security: Mental Maps and the Perception of Danger*
- *Creating Campus Climates that are Free from Sexual Harassment: Implications for Leaders in Higher Education*

Joint National Conference on Transition from School to Work

FAX 407-351-9556

- *Miss America*
- *Worlds Apart: A Look at the Future of Business and Education*
- *School-to-Work Transition: Possibilities, Pitfalls and Prospects*
- *Wrap-up: Where to From Here?*
- *Changing School Practices to Improve Student Performance*
- *Collaborative Instructional Leadership for School-to-Work Transition*
- *Making the School-to-Work Transiton through Technology Infusion*
- *Infusion*
- *School-to-Work Transition Reforms: Findings and Implications*
- *Internship Programs: Rindge School of Technical Arts*
- *Senior Options – A Work Experience for College-Bound Seniors*
- *"Eagle Enterprises" – Transition into the Real World*
- *Transitioning Youth*
- *Achieving School-to-Work Goals Inside the Core Curriculum Grades 1-12*
- *Youth with Disabilities and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994: School-Based Implications and Strategies*
- *Perspectives on Local-Level Implementation*
- *Decentralized Leadership and STW Restructuring*
- *Transition: Job Corps School-to-Work Model*
- *Connecting with the Community for successful School-to-Work Transition*

- *From Models to System Change: Lessons from Research and Practice*
- *The Answers to Every Question You Have About Why and How Employees Should Engage in and Support a STW*
- *Creating a Counseling Environment in Urban School-to-Work Programs*
- *Establishing Schools and Business Partnerships*
- *Work-Based Learning: Institutionalizing the Relationships Between Schools and Business*
- *Differences in Educational and Vocational Aspirations from Sophomore to Senior Years in High School*
- *Planning for Life*
- *Continuing Improvement in Programs Connecting School to Work: Youth Apprenticeship, Cooperative Education and School-Based Enterprise*
- *Elements of a Rural School-to-Work System*
- *Best Practice Program at the Elementary School Level: Kids and the Power of Work*
- *Career Exploration Guided by Ninth Grade Aptitude Assessments*
- *Meeting the Challenge: An Integrated Approach*
- *A Contextual Curriculum Model: Leading the Way to Common Sense Curriculum Development for School-to-Work Transition*
- *Education for Employment*
- *Tech Prep/School-to-Work: Career Pathways for all Students*
- *The Work Project for High-Risk Youth*
- *Westchester-Putnam: School-to-Work Partnership*
- *Bridging Work and Education Using Work Keys: An Action Project of the Southside Virginia Business and Education Commission*
- *Navigating Rough Waters: Transition of Youth with Emotional Behavioral Disturbances into Adulthood*
- *Integrated Vocational and Academic Learning Programs for Students from Special Populations*
- *The Impossible Dream*
- *Total Quality Management (TQM) Comes to the Classroom*
- *School to Work: It's a Matter of Character*
- *School-to-Work Initiatives in the Flint Community Schools*

Second Joint National Conference on Alternatives to Expulsion, Suspension and Dropping Out

☎ 301-459-9010
FAX 301-459-9021

- *Keynote Address: From Violence to Victory*
- *Bringing Parents/Guardians into the School: Making Your School User-Friendly*
- *Crossroads: Educational Alternatives for At-Risk Students*
- *Alternative Centers for Disruptive Students*
- *Group Work: Developing Advisories as an Organization Response for Intervention with Children At- Risk in Middle School*
- *High School Suspension Alternative Site Program*
- *Working Toward a Safe School: A K-12 Violence Prevention Program that Works*
- *Developing Student Self-Pride Through Quality Management: A Case Study*
- *Job Corps: Nationwide Academic and Vocational Training Opportunities*
- *Zero Tolerance Policy Requires 100% Enrollment Possibilities*
- *There's Room in America's Schools for All Youth: Youth Out of the Education Mainstream Joint Initiative*
- *Alternative Center for Education for 5th–8th Grade*
- *Chesterfield Communities in Schools: A Public/Private Droupout Prevention Partnership*
- *Motivating the African-American Male*
- *The "Working Together" Model for Student Success*
- *Reducing the ESDOs*
- *Sanchez High School – An Alternative Success Story*
- *Sharing the Wisdom and Passing the Baton*
- *The Work Project for High-Risk Youth*
- *Representing Students in Suspension and Expulsion Hearings*
- *Staying Connected: Information Resource via Internet*
- *Triad Alternative Program: T.A.P.ping Teen Potential*
- *Court Drive School: An Alternative School for the Behaviorally and Emotionally Handicapped Youngster*
- *A Comprehensive Intervention and Alternative School Model that Works*
- *The Michael J. Gavaghan Memorial Village Prep – An Experiment in Interagency Collaboration*
- *Motivating Students Through Technology Infusion*
- *The Louisiana Church-Based Tutorial Network*
- *Outcomes Versus Outputs*
- *Suspension and Family-centered Mediation: A Process that Works*
- *Providing for Student Success in Today's Society*
- *On-line High School: A 24-Hour Option*
- *Collaboration Within a County: Hennepin County's Approach to Truancy and Educational Neglect*
- *Zero Tolerance for Conditions Causing Expulsion*

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Fourth Joint National Conference on Gangs, Schools & Community

THURSDAY • MARCH 21

Registration (3:00 - 7:00 p.m.) • Networking Reception (7:00 - 8:00 p.m.)

FRIDAY • MARCH 22

Opening Session (8:15 - 9:45 a.m.)

Welcoming Remarks

Alan McEvoy, Ph.D., Wittenberg University, Springfield, OH; co-chair, co-founder and president of the Safe Schools Coalition, Inc.

Keynote Address

Reducing Youth Violence: Hope for the Future?

Betty Chemers, division director, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Washington, D.C.

Sessions (10:15 - 11:30 a.m.)

1. ***Private Conversations with Gang Members*** • Melissa Caudle, Ed.D., John H. Martyn High School, Jefferson, LA.
2. ***Mobilizing Schools and Communities to Prevent Violence*** • Helen S. Chaset, Ed.D., Interagency Coordinating Board for Community Use of Schools, Rockville, M.D.; and Mark Kelsch, principal, Sligo Middle School, Silver Springs, MD.
3. ***Results of a One Year Pilot: Restructuring Schools with Full Service School/Community-Based Programs*** • Linda Crosswhite, Jeanne Thompson, Cheryl Watkins, and Michael Rivera, Crosswhite and Associates, Glendale, AZ.
4. ***Mobilizing School Personnel and Community Collaboration to Combat Gangs and Other Youth Violence*** • Marilyn McGuire, principal on leave, author, national and international consultant; and Debra D. Drain, project director, Interlocal Gangs Program of Snohomish County, WA.
5. ***Schoolyard Bullies: Strategies for Prevention*** • June Amette, The National School Safety Center.
6. ***Combining the Cycle of Violence: A Profile of S.E. Asian Youth Gangs*** • Ronald E. Cowart, Dallas Baptist University, Dallas, TX; and Melinda T. Cowart, University of North Texas, Dallas, TX.
7. ***Combatting Gangs Using a School Resource Officer Model*** • Mary Lou Bergeron, Lawrence Public Schools, Lawrence, MA; and Officers Sean Burke and Mike Padellaro. Lawrence Police Department, Lawrence, MA.

Plenary Session (1:00 - 2:15 p.m.)
Creating a Climate of Hope

Richard G. Ramsey, principal, Lake Shore Middle School, Belle Glade, FL.

Sessions (2:30 - 3:45 p.m.)

8. ***Peace Maintenance Strategies*** • Marlene Zakierski, Mount Vernon Public Schools, Scarsdale, NY; and Lori V. Quigley, Aquinas High School, Bronx, NY.

9. ***Asian Youth Gangs*** • Tom Batsis, Ph.D., School of Education, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA.

10. ***The Building of a Community Consortium*** • Lura Davidson, Ph.D., Brownsville Independent School District, Brownsville, TX.

11. ***Youth for Justice – Exercises in Participation*** • Jack N. Hoar and Evelyn Davis, Center for Civic Education, Calabasas, CA.

12. ***Recent Research Findings on Gang Cultures*** • Elen Grigg, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Washington, D.C.

13. Panel session organized by the **National Education Association.**

Sessions (4:00 - 5:15 p.m.)

14. ***Save Our Sons and Daughters*** • Clementine Barfield, founder of Save Our Sons and Daughters, Detroit, MI.

15. ***Collaborative Initiatives and Programs*** • Elen Grigg, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Washington, D.C.

16. ***Bringing Them Back Alive*** • Jose M. de Olivares, regional director, Office of Job Corps, Region VI, Dallas, TX.

17. ***Ways to Produce a Successful Violence Prevention Program*** • Marsha D. Prophet, Ph.D., Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, CT; and Patti Herring, Ph.D., Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, CA.

18. ***Beyond Risk: Building Respect, Resiliency, and Responsibility*** • Vicki Phillips, Personal Development, Carmel Valley, CA.

SATURDAY • MARCH 23

Plenary Session (8:15 - 9:45 a.m.)

Giving Voice: Mothers Whose Lives Are Touched By Gangs

A panel session composed of four mothers of gang members or former gang members; with Javier Rios, supervisor, Dallas Gang Intervention Center, Dallas, TX. Moderator: Robert Welker, Ph.D., Wittenberg University, Springfield, OH.

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Sessions (10:15 - 11:30 a.m.)

19. ***Conflict Management Program for Reducing Violence and Gangs: A School Community Model*** • Charles McLeod, Ph.D., McLeod Group for Leadership Development, Phoenix, AZ; and Patricia M. Wilson, Ph.D., Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.

20. ***Helping Youth to Stay Out of Gangs: Five Critical Objectives*** • Norman Randolph, Ph.D., assistant superintendent, Duquesne Public Schools, Duquesne, PA.

21. ***Baseline Training Program for Teens — We Can Help Your Community!*** • Jill Glaser and Pam McCracken, TEAM Fort Collins, Fort Collins, CO.

22. ***Peace to the Streets – Gangs, Not My Child*** • James A. Holmes and Patricia A. Holmes, Gang Alternative Prevention Program, San Antonio, TX.

23. ***Safety in Suburbia: A Proactive Approach in Dealing with Gangs and Youth Violence*** • Karl Ota, Kellie Ackerman, Linda Uphus, Lance Erie, and Lyle Krislock, Central Valley School District, Greenacres, WA.

24. ***We're All In This Together: Violence Prevention Skills for Parents, Teachers and Kids*** • Karen L. Summers, Committee for Children, Seattle, WA.

25. ***School Crisis and Violence Management*** • Police Chief Eugene Lewis, Galveston Independent School District, Galveston, TX. This session is sponsored by the **National Association of School Safety and Law Enforcement Organizations.**

Plenary Session (1:00 - 2:15 p.m.)

Drugs, Weapons, and Gangs: School and Community Responses

Kenneth S. Trump, director of Safety and Security, Parma City School District, Parma, OH.

Sessions (2:30 - 3:45 p.m.)

26. ***School Security Assessments and Crisis Preparedness*** • Kenneth S. Trump, director of Safety and Security, Parma City School District, Parma, OH.

27. ***Identifying the Family Connection*** • John L. Reimer, Jacksonville High School – Academia Resources, Jacksonville, NC.

28. ***Collaboration Gangs Up on Violence*** • CynDi Glavis, interagency coordinator, Tustin Unified School District, Tustin, CA; Cheryl M. Snowdon, consultant, CMS Consulting, Huntington Beach, CA; Melissa O'Neal, Tustin Healthy Start Program, Children's Bureau of Southern California, Anaheim, CA.

29. ***Positive, Creative, Seductive Solutions to Help Troubled Youth Achieve "The American Dream"*** • Shirley E. Johnson, Oglesby's Communications & Consultant Agency, Kansas City, MO; Hattie E. Knox, Milwaukee Public School System, Milwaukee, WI; and Lillie B. Kidd, Little Rock Public School System, Pine Bluff, AR.

30. ***Staying Connected: Gang Information Resources via Internet*** • Fritz J. Erickson, Ed.D., Stayer Research & Learning Center, Millersville University, Millersville, PA; and John A. Vonk, Ph.D., University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO.

Sessions (4:00 - 5:15 p.m.)

31. ***The Role of Ethnicity in the Lives of Gangs and Gang Members*** • Curtis W. Branch, Ph.D., Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY.

32. ***A Community Approach to Gangs*** • Edward A. Sullivan, Ph.D., Providence College, Providence, RI.

33. ***Mediation with Gang-Involved Youth*** • Melinda Smith, New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution, Albuquerque, NM.

34. ***Using Gang Members as Violence-Reducing Sources*** • Michael Borrero, Ph.D., and Chan Williams-bye, Institute for Violence Reduction, University of Connecticut School of Social Work, West Hartford, CT.

35. ***Collaborative Problem-Solving: A Team-Based Approach to School Safety*** • Richard L. Glover and Colette D. Ellis, The Creative Source Management Consultants, Brooklyn, NY.

SUNDAY • MARCH 24

Sessions (8:45 - 10:00 a.m.)

36. ***Preventing Violence Through Community Partnerships*** • Denise Brown and Paulette Hoeflich, Portsmouth Alternative Secondary School, Portsmouth, NH.

37. ***A Comprehensive, Collaborative Approach to the Issue of Youth Violence*** • Courtney Gaskins and Andrea Ley, Bailey's Making the Grade, Fairfax, VA.

38. ***Why Parents and Educators Need to Understand Gang Signs*** • Richard Arthur, author of *Gangs and Schools*, retired educator and street worker, Richmond, CA.

39. ***Aiming for Success*** • Gail L. Cuffie, Project — There's Hope, Inc., Baltimore, MD.

Plenary Session (10:15 - 11:30 a.m.)

Comin' Up:
The Boys and Girls Club Model Program in Fort Worth

A panel session moderated by **Frank Sanchez Jr., director, Delinquency Prevention, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Atlanta, GA.**

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Call for Presenters

Sixth Joint International Conference on Sexual Assault and Harassment on Campus • Nov. 2 – 4, 1996 • Long Beach, CA

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April 15, 1996

Second Joint National Conference on Transition from School to Work • Nov. 14 – 16, 1996 • Orlando, FL

Deadline for Submissions
April 15, 1996

For Guidelines
☎ 800-537-4903

Networking on the Internet

If you would like to share and learn more about alternative education, youth gangs, school-to-work programs, and reducing sexual assault and harassment on school and college campuses, surf to our home page on the INTERNET. We have comprehensive data bases on gangs and alternative education, including 1) over 4,000 school- and community-based alternative programs; 2) forthcoming workshops and conferences; 3) recent conferences and citations of presenters and presentations; 4) reviews of books and videos; 5) access to national organizations concerned with these topics; 6) access to programs and projects such as dropout prevention, federal legislative efforts, and U.S. Department of Justice; 7) access to research data bases, including ERIC, Northwest Educational Research Laboratory, and Research for Better Schools; and 8) a list of persons by ID who would like to receive further information. You can join too!

Our homepage: http://ssc.millersv.edu/safe.htm

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Sexual Assault and Harassment on Campus

November 2-4, 1996
Sheraton Long Beach • Long Beach, California

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